

**Western Washington University Associated Students
Legislative Affairs Council
Thursday, January 26, 2016 VU 567**

Present: Patrick Eckroth (ASVP for Governmental Affairs)

Absent:

Advisor:

Secretary:

Guest:

MOTIONS

LAC-15-F- Approve the minutes from

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Patrick Eckroth, Chair of Legislative Affairs Council, called the meeting to order at 4:10pm.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. REVISIONS TO THE AGENDA

A. Patrick briefly addressed the council, saying he'd like to expedite the reimbursement of the student that gave testimony in front of the state legislature. Lisa said he should give the council enough information, until they're comfortable making a decision. Patrick said the information is listed under Information Items and he's hoping the council will feel comfortable moving it to Action Items when the time comes.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. MOTION LAC-16-W-10 by Selander

Approved the minutes from 1-19-2016

Second: Doyle Vote: 9-0-0 Action: Passed

IV. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Local Legislative Agenda—McKenzie Dent
McKenzie said she and Bridget have been working on a local issues survey. Overall she saw less problems than she expected though she did see a few that concerned problems with landlords and parking. They're making their way through them but the written ones handed out at Viking Lobby Day will take some time. Right now she's using the responses to plan a local lobby day which

will be like VLD but on a smaller scale. Usually it's at the beginning of spring quarter and McKenzie welcomed anyone to help with it. She said the agenda items she's considering are as follows: prepaid postage on ballots for Whatcom County, requiring landlords to had voter registration updates to tenants, a general one about affordable housing that will include the Aloha hotel site, resolving parking issues that students have (expanding residential parking sites, making sure off campus parking for students is held up, etc.), tenant education, installing civic education in local high schools (which might involve Western students going to local high schools and talking to students), and adequate garbage and recycling for tenants. She's still going through surveys and asked the council for further suggestions. Bridget said a lot of surveys have mentioned mold problems in rentals. McKenzie asked if that should go under increasing inspections or holding landlords responsible. Inspections will be starting sometime in January and it might fall under the education umbrella now. Patrick said sending people to the high schools will be good but suggested not sending too many. Andrea suggested going during lunch so they could do multiple sessions in a shorter amount of time. Patrick said the Board of Directors is doing a meeting on February 5th in the middle of the VU so it'll be more open to the public and suggested it as a place to get opinions on the local agenda. Haley said the parking issue is something she's been affected by and she'd be willing to help with it. McKenzie said it's been a problem for her too, when she brought it to the city they told her she could buy paint and paint the curb herself. The residential parking zones are likely to be helpful, some residential areas already have them but Western doesn't and they don't get enforced. Nora asked if Bellingham has a metric for affordable housing. McKenzie said it's 80% of the median family income. The proposal was targeted towards homeless individuals and people with disabilities. Andrea said the closing of Aloha displaced a lot of homeless people. Bridget asked where the Aloha is, Haley said it was on Samish but was condemned and knocked down. Patrick said they're in the process of doing something similar with Mac's because people were staying there longer than motels usually allow. Tisa said it was about a month. Bridget asked what was happening with the state of emergency due to homelessness that the mayor declared. McKenzie said the city endorsed a letter the mayor sent to Governor Inslee and they're having a legislative day soon to go down to Olympia but nothing yet. The council volunteered for agenda items they'd be willing to help with. McKenzie said the draft for the Aloha would be coming next week.

V. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. WSA Funding Request

Patrick brought up the funding request for the WSA Board Meeting happening that weekend. After the Board meeting the WSA is doing a training on how and when to organize. There is room for 12 people to go and this funding request is for the extra vehicle. They're focusing on bringing extra students down. Josie briefly explained the organizing training happening on Sunday, it will be geared towards organizing on campus and it'll have various breakout sessions to get into specifics. Sarah wanted to clarify that they were taking two vehicles. Patrick said

yes, they both seat seven. They'll be leaving at 7:00am on Saturday morning. One vehicle will be staying both days but it's likely the other will be going back up to Bellingham after the Board meeting on Saturday.

MOTION LAC-16-W-11 by Dearing

Move the WSA Funding request from Information Items to Action Items.

Second: Selander Vote: 9-0-0 Action: Passed

B. Reimbursement for Student Testimony

Patrick said a student at VTD was asked to testify in front of the state legislature about her experience with being a homeless high school student. The request is to pay for the bus ticket (\$75). Josie said Ta, the student, did a fantastic job and the bill looks like it'll wither go through this season or the next. It'll do a lot to ensure homeless high school students will be kept near their schools. Bridget said when Ta was in high school she was often placed in parts of the city that were far from her school. Ta is an education major with an emphasis on special education and social justice.

MOTION LAC-16-W-12 by Dearing

Move the Reimbursement for Student Testimony from Information Item to Action Item.

Second: Doyle Vote: 9-0-0 Action: Passed

VI. ACTION ITEMS

A. Reimbursement for Student Testimony

MOTION LAC-16-W-13 by Eckroth

Approve funds not to exceed \$90 to reimburse Taylor Frese for her travel to Olympia.

Second: Selander Vote: 9-0-0 Action: Passed

B. USSA Conference Funding

Patrick said this is a multiple day event taking place in Washington DC right before spring break. The conference will consist of workshops, trainings, organizing, and meeting with federal legislators. Fast year Western met with several Washington state congressmen and both WA senators. Patrick said he fixed the mistakes on the request sheet and made a table on the back that details the costs of sending 8 people, he also included the lump sum of 12 people. Total for 8 students is \$7,700. He's in the process of finding out how much the TAC has in reserves but he's confident TAC has enough money to pay for 12 people if they wanted to. Sending 12 people might be hard to handle for the person in charge but they could find a way to make it easier. McKenzie asked if the

application form had opened yet. Patrick said he planned on putting it up that night or the day after. McKenzie asked how many students have gone in the past. Josie said the previous year they had 15. Both years before that they had 5. Patrick said doing it in groups of 4 is practical for lodging. He also said either way more than 8 people are going because Abby Ramos, the VP of Diversity, is sending people through the ESC. He's not positive about the number of students but he's meeting with Abby soon to figure it out. Nora said she'd like to send 12 if possible because it's a good use of student dollars. Andrea said it's a good opportunity for students. Patrick said if that's the case he'll look for two people to lead the delegations. The meeting when they pick who will go will be long. They're doing outreach right now through a bullseye email. Patrick said they might want to bump the total up a bit to cover airfare for 12 people and food, because DC is expensive. They debated the cost of food for a while. They decided on funds not to exceed \$14,000.

MOTION LAC-16-W-13 by Selander

Approve funds not to exceed \$14,000 for the USSA Conference.

Second: Newhouse Vote: 9-0-0 Action: Passed

C. WSA Funding Request

MOTION LAC-16-W-14 by Selander

Approve the funding request for the WSA Board of Directors Meeting.

Second: Newhouse Vote: 8-0-0 Action: Passed

VII. REPORTS

- A. VP for Governmental Affairs:** Environmental Lobby Day outreach has started. So far twenty people have registered, though they have enough space to send 45. The ESP is in the process of creating a small printable agenda to give to the legislators. The fuel exemption agenda item is similar to the one LAC had under new and dedicated revenue. It's not high priority because it's a policy year and they're not changing the tax code but ESP wants to get the dialogue started for next year. The CAFOS item is huge for pollution, there's a bill going through right now but it's not what they're advocating for. It's basically an update to the permit that already exists so it won't help the pollution that gets into ground water. This item along with the Oil Transportation Safety Act are both high priority. In other news, the USSA Summit outreach will start soon. Patrick said he'll be working with the work studies in the REP and he's talking with the Board about reaching out to RHA. There's a WSA meeting happening over the weekend in Olympia.
- B. Western Votes:** There was an event last week. Lots of people came and were interested in running for elections and committees. Nora said there will be a meeting soon.

C. Legislative Liaison: Josie plans on sending out an email with a detailed version of their update later. The Academic Bill of Rights is going through right now and there are five sections. Western is okay with most of the sections but two (not enforcing trigger warnings in classrooms and not allowing students to take action against faculty for microaggressions) are ones we do not support. It's likely to be changes or struck down. There is a proposed plan to change the State Need Grant that will only fund the first two years of college and incentivizes community colleges to such an extent that students won't have a lot of choice. They're trying to oppose it while still respecting community colleges. Voter Rights Act is coming up soon. Motor Voter looks like it will get passed but only for 17-year-olds. Extending the voter registration deadline is going well. Ta Frese did a good job testifying for homelessness aid. Senator Liias is introducing a package of bills that will include the Student Bill of Rights which will propose a tax break for businesses helping students pay off their student loans. It will also address Higher One. The student success agenda item will be coming up soon, they were surprised Western wasn't included in last year's budget. There will be a hearing on Thursday to increase the State Need Grant to include undocumented students. People will be working on a common app for disabilities. On Friday they're talking about creating a fund that professors would be allowed to pull from to make open student resources, like an alternative to textbooks. This will be sponsored by Stambaugh and has a lot of Democratic support. Patrick asked why Motor Voter is 17 and not 16. Josie said there's not logical answer except it's less intimidating.

MOTION LAC-16-W-15 by Selander

Motion to adjourn.

Second: Dearing Vote: 8-0-0 Action: Passed

Meeting adjourned at 5:30pm.